

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Istook Leads Trade Talks With Top Chinese Officials in Beijing

Beijing, PRC – Expanding Oklahoma business trade to China and current world affairs were the topics as Congressman Ernest Istook (R-OK) spoke with two of China's top government leaders Wednesday in Beijing.

Istook briefed Cheng Siwei, the Vice Chairman of the Chinese People's Congress, in the Great Hall of the People across from Tiananmen Square about Oklahoma products and capabilities to serve China's market of 1.3 billion people. Cheng, who has traveled extensively in the U.S., told Istook, "The best steak I've ever had was in Oklahoma." Istook used that opportunity to press the Chinese leader to open its door to the importation of American beef.

Further trade talks took place at the foreign ministry where Istook exchanged ideas with Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing. Li has been to Oklahoma City three times. Li and Istook held a candid discussion about U.S. restrictions on Chinese electronics as well as how China is addressing specific U.S. trade concerns.

Sponsored by the State Chamber of Oklahoma, Istook is leading a delegation of 20 Oklahoma business leaders on the trade mission. **"We are engaging in the highest level of business talks ever held by an Oklahoma delegation,"** said Richard P. Rush, president and CEO of the State Chamber who is traveling with the delegation. **"These meetings are truly historic for Oklahoma. This is my 5th trip to China and the culmination of many relationships built through the years. Istook's position as a leader in the U.S. House of Representatives has opened doors to the highest levels of Chinese government, and he is doing an outstanding job of advocating Oklahoma business and values to these leaders. The long-term potential of this trip is truly exciting."**

All members of the delegation were allowed to sit in on the visit with the two top leaders. Various groups of the delegation have been meeting with their specific counterparts in China to further trade relations. Most notable of these was a Wednesday morning meeting led by Istook and Rush with the Civil Aviation Authority of China (CAAC). CAAC is China's counterpart to the U.S. Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) that reports to Istook as chairman of the appropriations subcommittee on transportation. **"We found many common areas of interest where Oklahoma may be able to play a role in the future that will mutually benefit both countries and Oklahoma businesses who support the FAA, which has its largest installation in Oklahoma City,"** Rush said.

Istook said he came to China to open doors for Oklahoma businesses to work profitably with China's strong development needs while building important relationships for sustained business and cultural partnerships. **"It's easy to focus on those issues where we disagree, but it's even more important to develop relationships that allow us to solve problems. There has been an amazing amount of progress between America and China in my lifetime, and with the business leaders on our trip, I hope to accelerate that progress for the next generation,"** Istook said.

Officials of Boeing-China hosted the delegation in Beijing for dinner and encouraged the group to continue Oklahoma's pursuit of the vast China marketplace. David Wang, president of Boeing-China said, **"I commend Rep. Istook for his vision and insight to lead this delegation. China is a market so large and with so many needs that Oklahoma businesses can meet in a manner beneficial to both countries. Ernest Istook understands that,"** he said.

Istook and the Oklahoma delegation are spending ten days in China meeting with leading government and business leaders in Liaoning Province, Beijing, Gansu Province (which is Oklahoma's sister state), and Shanghai.